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Interim Final Rules for Group Health Plans and Health Insurance Issuers Relating to Coverage of Preventive Services Under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Comment On: EBSA-2010-0018-0002

Group Health Plans and Health Insurance Issuers Relating to Coverage of Preventive Services under Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: Amendment

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General Comment

Dear Secretary Sebelius,

I oppose any exemption that allows an exclusion of preventative health services for some women based on their employer's religious beliefs. It is not religious freedom that is protected when such an exemption is made, but individual freedom that is restricted. Just as the government cannot dictate the religious beliefs of its constituents, employers should not be allowed to dictate their religious beliefs on their employees. Even in the case where the employer is faith-based, there may be employees working at the organization who do not subscribe to the same set of religious beliefs as the organization's doctrine.

It is the government's responsibility to protect religious freedoms. Contraceptive coverage by health care plans is an important step to giving women the true freedom to plan for their futures and their families. Women are not truly free until they have the ability to decide what is right for their lives, their families, their futures, and their bodies.

Ensuring that all employers offer contraceptive coverage, regardless of religious position, brings women one step closer to the freedoms we deserve.

Sincerely,

Melissa Rung-Blue